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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (8 Jul 68) FOR OT RD 682247

18 July 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st  
Aviation Brigade, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

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2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE  
APO San Francisco 96384  
"NGUY-HIEM"

AVBA-C

25 MAY 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade for Period  
Ending 30 Apr 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

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1. (C) Section 1, Operations: Significant Activities.

a. Command.

(1) (U) The mission of the 1st Aviation Brigade remained unchanged. However the administrative functions performed by the Brigade Headquarters were expanded primarily in the S-1 area of responsibility (see Incl 1).

(2) (U) On 17 Mar 1968 Maj George W. Barnitt Jr., 071139, replaced LTC Richard G. Zeller, 063640 as Brigade S-2. LTC Zeller rotated at the completion of his tour. There were no other changes in the Command Group or Principal Staff.

(3) (U) At the end of the reporting period the organization and location of major units were as shown in the organization chart at Incl 2 and the station list at Incl 3.

(4) (U) During the reporting period, Commander's Notes 19, 20 and 21 and Tactical Lessons Learned 7 were published. See Incl 4, 5, 6 and 7.

b. S-1.

(1) (C) The strength of the 1st Aviation Brigade as of 30 April 1968 was 27,074, distributed as follows:

	<u>OFF/WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
HHC	60	198
12th Gp	1746	7702
16th Gp	633	3783

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters 1st Aviation Brigade for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RL) (U)

	<u>OFF/TD</u>	<u>EN</u>
17th Gp	1409	8251
164th Gp	505	2279
58th Bn	<u>39</u>	<u>469</u>
TOTAL	4,392	22,682

(2) (U) The number of recommendations for awards (ACM and higher) received during the period 1 February through 30 April 1968 are shown by type, with totals for the period. The increased enemy action during the "TET" offensive caused a major increase in the number of valor awards processed.

<u>AWARDS</u>	<u>RECEIVED</u>
LM & DSC	20
SILVER STAR	72
SOLDIER'S MEDAL	55
DFC	358
AIR MEDAL	11,707
BSM	596
PURPLE HEART	210
ACM	678
BSM "V"	187
AM "V"	587
ACM "V"	<u>215</u>
TOTAL	<u>14,685</u>

(3) (U) Utilization of R&R quotas during the reporting period was as follows:

	<u>ISSUED</u>	<u>USED</u>	<u>% UTILIZATION</u>
HHC, 164th Gp & 58th Bn	936	947	101.2
12th Gp	2306	2359	102.3
16th Gp*	210	149	70.9
17th Gp	<u>2156</u>	<u>1933</u>	<u>89.7</u>
TOTAL	5,608	5,388	96.0

\* Period for 16th Gp is 1 March to 30 April 1968.

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c. S-2.

(1) (FOUO) During the period 1 February 1968 to 30 April 1968 the S-2 Section concentrated on Escape and Evasion Training, personnel security investigation, personnel security orientations and investigations of security violations.

(2) (FOUO) During the period one hundred-fifty four (154) students were sent to Jungle Survival Schools.

(3) (FOUO) The following Personnel Security Investigative actions were processed through the 1st Aviation Brigade's Personnel Security Investigation Branch during the reporting period:

(a) Requests for Background Investigation:	16
(b) Requests for verification of Background Investigations:	154
(c) Requests for National Agency Checks:	114
(d) Requests for verification of National Agency Checks:	147
(e) Request for verification of Entrance National Agency Checks:	<u>3</u> 434

Of the 434 PSI actions processed to date, 271 (62%) of these actions have been completed favorably.

d. S-3.

(1) (C) A total of one Air Cavalry Squadron, one Aviation Battalion (Flight Facilities Mobile), three Aviation Companies and thirteen Detachments were added to the strength of the 1st Aviation Brigade during this quarter.

(2) (C) Organization.

(a) The following units arrived in Vietnam and were assigned to the 1st Aviation Brigade as indicated:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>US/RV GO NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
21 Feb 68	271st Assault Support Helicopter Company 361st Transportation Detachment 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry (Air)	498	2 Feb 68

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**SUBJECT:** Operational Report of Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSPOR-65 (R1) (U)

USARV GO

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
15 Apr 68	361st Armed Helicopter Company 621st Signal Detachment 665th Transportation Detachment	1711	13 Apr 68
25 Apr 68	359th Aviation Support Detachment 361st Aviation Support Detachment 362d Aviation Support Detachment 363d Aviation Support Detachment 365th Aviation Support Detachment	1741	15 Apr 68
27 Apr 68	360th Aviation Support Detachment 364th Aviation Support Detachment 366th Aviation Support Detachment	1848	21 Apr 68

(b) The following units were activated in Vietnam and assigned to the 1st Aviation Brigade as indicated:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>USARV GO NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
1 Feb 68	365th Transportation Detachment	693	12 Feb 68
1 Mar 68	58th Aviation Battalion (Flight Facilities Mobile)	953	1 Mar 68
14 Mar 68	Corps Aviation Company (Provisional)	1431	30 Mar 68

(c) The following units assigned to USARV and attached to the 1st Cav Div (Amlb) were reassigned to the 1st Aviation Brigade:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>USARV GO NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
15 Feb 68	478th Heavy Helicopter Company 383d Transportation Detachment	498	2 Feb 68

These units were then attached to 1st Cav Div (Airmobile) per USARV GO 499, dated 2 February 1968.

(d) The 365th Transportation Detachment shown in para 1b above, was reassigned to USARSUPTHAI and deployed to Thailand on 1 March 1968, per authority of USARV message AVNGC-0 38887, DTG 030819Z March 68.

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(a) On 1 April 1968, C Troop, 7th Squadron 17th Cavalry was reassigned, less personnel and equipment, from the 1st Aviation Brigade to the US Army Armor Center, Fort Knox, Kentucky by USARV GO 182 dated 21 March 1968. Personnel and equipment were assigned to the 8th Cavalry, 23d "Americus" Infantry Division.

(3) (U) MTOE actions during the quarter consisted primarily of preparing MTOE's to standardize like aviation units. The DA approved concept of integrating aviation maintenance and avionics detachments, (currently organized on separate TOE/MTOE's) into supported aviation unit MTOE's was included in these actions. The following MTOE's were prepared and submitted through channels to DA for technical review and approval:

<u>MTOE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>
1-77G	Assault Helicopter Company
1-77G	Assault Helicopter Company (120th)
1-258G	Assault Support Helicopter Company
1-218G	Surveillance Airplane Company
1-257F	Reconnaissance Airplane Company
1-257F	Utility Airplane Company
1-111T	Armed Helicopter Company
1-258G	Combat Aviation Battalion
1-252G	Combat Aviation Group

(4) (C) The 1st Aviation Brigade Headquarters completed construction of a hardened Brigade Tactical Operations Center (TOC) on 1 April 1968. This facility contains necessary communications, planning maps and operational reference files and can accommodate key command and staff personnel during periods of increased enemy activity. The TOC has proved to be an excellent facility for the expeditious handling of operational and status reports processed by this headquarters.

(5) (U) Operations: A special report of Lessons Learned during the first five days of the VC/NVA TET Offensive, 29 Jan to 2 Feb 1968 is included at Incl 8. Where possible this Headquarters has taken appropriate action to implement all recommendations with special attention to the following areas:

(a) Section I, Item 3a. A new security plan has been implemented for Long Binh Heliport to include increased guards and bunkered positions.

(b) Section I, Item 3b. The Brigade Headquarters has constructed a hardened TOC which has been operational since 1 April.

(c) Section I, Item 4a. An analysis of ammunition allocation has been completed and stockage levels have been increased for appropriate items.

(d) Section II, Item 2a. Timely intelligence is now received by Brigade Hq in the form of two daily spot reports from each subordinate Group.

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(6) (C) Training:

(a) Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) Training.

1. UH-1D pilot transition training continued throughout the quarter. One class of VNAF pilots graduated on 12 March 1968 and another class of 15 is currently in training. No significant problems have been encountered and this program continues as scheduled.

2. Arrangements have been completed to conduct a course to qualify VNAF pilots as instructor pilots on the UH-1H. The first class of three is scheduled to commence on 1 May 1968. It is anticipated that each class will receive approximately three weeks of training. No problems have been encountered.

3. An OJT course to train VNAF avionics specialists in maintenance of UH-1 avionics equipment is being conducted. The initial course began on 22 April 1968 with four trainees. Graduation will be on a proficiency basis and a total of 16 VNAF personnel are tentatively scheduled to complete this training.

(b) Royal Thai Aviation Training. The UH-1 pilot transition training of Royal Thai aviators has been completed and Thai aviation personnel returned to Thailand on 18 March 1968. No further classes are anticipated at this time.

(c) New Equipment Training Teams (NETT) for U-21, AH-1G and OH-6A aircraft continued to function during this reporting period. Students were trained and graduated from courses as indicated:

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>U-21</u>	<u>AH-1G</u>	<u>OH-6A</u>
Aviator Transition	39	48	92
Airframe Maintenance		60	
Engine Maintenance		32	
Armament Maintenance		56	
SAS Avionics Maintenance		24	

(7) (C) Testing of New Equipment. A test and evaluation of the new XM 429 proximity fuse and XM 229 warhead for the 2.75 in FFAR have been completed and recommendations for employment and training in these munitions has been submitted to Hq USAF/RV. These new munitions will provide a valuable new capability when authority for their full operational use is granted.

e. S-4.

(1) (U) CMMI Team. The 1st Aviation Brigade CMMI team conducted a total of 9 CMMI's during this quarter. The team normally spent four days in a battalion area and inspected at least two units during this period. The CMMI Team now consists of 10 inspectors, an increase of three personnel since the last report.

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The following categories of equipment were inspected: Aircraft, vehicles, weapons, ammunition, communication, Avionics, chemical, supply, PLL, SL, Maintenance Management and shop operations.

(2) (C) Issue of Forklifts. Under the Expedited Non-Standard Urgent Requirement for equipment (ENSURE 93) the 1st Aviation Brigade was notified on 27 February 1968 that it was to receive 65 Rough Terrain Forklifts, Clark Ranger Model, 4000 pounds. As of 17 April 1968, 39 of these forklifts have been issued to transportation detachments assigned to aviation companies. Ten of the 65 forklifts were diverted in support of an operation and will be returned upon its termination. From movement data available, the other 16 forklifts are in-country and 1st Logistical Command is in the process of locating them.

(3) (U) Nomex Flight Suits. During April units of this command started receiving fire resistant uniforms. The priority of issue for these uniforms is:

- I. One per crewmember of observation utility or armed helicopter.
- II. Second suit to personnel of Priority I.
- III. One per crewmember of CH-47, CH-54, OV-1 or O-1 aircraft.
- IV. Second suit to personnel of Priority III.
- V. One per crewmember of U-1, U-6, U-8 and U-21 aircraft.
- VI. Second suit to personnel of Priority V.

As of quarters end fill data was not yet available for all subordinate units. All units did have valid requests in process for authorized levels for this item.

(4) (U) Conex Inventory Reporting. Emphasis has been placed on return of unneeded Conex's to transportation channels. The one time inventory required by MAC TMA-10 has been completed and all conexes retained for essential storage have been reported by serial number.

f. Information Office.

(1) (U) Hawk Magazine. In an effort to improve the quality of the Brigade Magazine a change in printers was initiated. The Contract with Tiger Publishing Company, Okinawa was terminated with the March issue. A new six month contract was negotiated with Dai Nippon Publishing Company, Tokyo, Japan commencing with the April issue. Commencing with the May issue the magazine will consist of 24 pages, four in full color. The number of copies was also increased to 6,000 (one copy for every four men). No problems were encountered in the change of printers. In an effort to make the magazine more representative of all 1st Aviation Brigade elements, brigade staff and subordinate units have been solicited to contribute magazine items on a monthly basis. Special interest columns were also initiated.

(2) (U) Camera Equipment. Supply action was initiated in April to request the three additional cameras authorized in proposed MTOE 29-701T.

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(3) (U) Radio Program. During the reporting period several 1st Aviation Brigade five minute actualities (taped on-the-spot interviews) were aired on the AFVN radio Sunday program called "Panorama". In addition, a weekly five minute program called Golden Hawk Highlights is planned to start during the next quarter.

(4) (U) Army Aviation Daily Summary. During the reporting period the OPREP-5 Report was revised and no longer contains a narrative wrap-up of significant daily activities. In the past, Group and Battalion Information Officers were able to write hard and feature news releases by extracting information from the OPREP-5 Daily Summary. All Group IO's were advised to gather the information previously found in the OPREP-5 Daily Summary from the AAE journals or, in the case of a Battalion, from the BOC journal.

g. (U) Signal. On 1 April 1968 the Brigade Communications Center and Radio Section were moved to hardened bunkers in the new Brigade TOC. In addition, a 45KW generator was installed to provide backup power for the Communications Center, Radio Section and Operations Center.

h. Surgeon.

(1) (U) During this reporting period, aeromedical coverage maintained the level achieved during the preceding quarter. However, there remained locations at which aeromedical coverage was less than optimum because of the need for personnel and equipment. These locations included Long Giao (Black Horse), LZ English and Phan Thiet. According to programmed replacements, adequate flight surgeons will arrive to maintain the number of physicians currently assigned.

(2) (C) The period saw the movement of the 308th Battalion Medical Section and the 154th Medical Detachment (OM) with their supported units from the 12th Aviation Group to the 16th Aviation Group of the 1st Aviation Brigade. Also, the Brigade was able to assign a flight surgeon to the 135th Assault Helicopter Company at Long Giao (Black Horse). Meanwhile, plans progressed as scheduled to add three Aeromedical Detachments to the Brigade. Of these Detachments, two will be assigned to the 17th Aviation Group and one to the 12th Aviation Group.

(3) (U) During this quarter, proposals for the reorganization of aeromedical support were staffed within the 1st Aviation Brigade and forwarded to HQ, USARV. These proposals call for a six man, instead of a nine man, medical detachment and a battalion medical section which includes an MSC Administrative Officer, a lab technician and a X-Ray technician. It is felt the proposed additions and deletions to the currently authorized equipment will provide more efficient aeromedical support.

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(4) (U) Other activities included a letter of instruction on the issue of morphine to aviators and a report of Lessons Learned during the TET offensive. Frequent staff visits were made to subordinate units. These visits included attendance by the Surgeon at the 17th Aviation Group safety meeting and participation by a Surgeon's representative in Command Management Maintenance Inspections within the Brigade.

(5) (U) During the quarter, the Brigade began field testing a new litter device for helicopter hoist operations.

(6) (U) Individual battalions were directed to continue to forward their Command Health Reports to this office. Review of these reports is essential to compare data on a country-wide basis without loss of important items.

i. Safety.

(1) (U) The aircraft accident rate during this period continued a downward trend from the previous reporting period, dropping from 27.5 to 25.2. This continued drop is attributed to firm command supervision and the constant application of professional principles by all personnel in their flying operations. The Brigade experienced the lowest accident rate during the month of April (21.0) that it has had since July 1966. Results of the accident prevention effort for April demonstrated that a relatively low accident rate is possible even under the difficult circumstances of a combat environment.

(2) (U) During this period the Deputy Brigade Commander for Administration plus a team from the Brigade Safety and Maintenance offices completed command staff visits to all Brigade units, presenting an aircraft accident prevention lecture program. The lecture program stressed the eleven points essential to an aircraft accident prevention program outlined by the Commanding General in a command letter of 29 Nov 67. It also stressed the role of the commander and pilot in reducing accidents. A total of thirty-one, one hour lectures were presented to approximately 3335 personnel. Members of the team made brief but effective surveys of all installations and maintenance areas. The critical importance of aircraft and engines made it imperative that efficient management of our resources be constantly emphasized.

(3) (U) In April the Brigade formed a standardization team as an integral part of the Aviation Safety Office. Through periodic visits to all units the team will monitor the Brigade standardization program to determine training quality and individual pilot proficiency. The team will assist unit SIF's and IP's on problems relating to MOI, flight procedures, maintenance of records, publications procurement and aviator training.

j. Ch plain.

(1) (U) Religious Activities for the Quarter:

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(a) Group Religious Services.

<u>1</u>	Number conducted:	761
<u>2</u>	Number attending:	28,439

(b) Religious Education

<u>1</u>	Number occasions:	392
<u>2</u>	Number attending:	4,024

(c) Number of Pastoral Visits: 9,448

(2) (U) There were 19 Chaplains assigned to the Brigade during the reporting period.

k. Headquarters Commandant.

(1) (U) There were no changes or additions to the Headquarters Company mission planned or accomplished as of this date.

(2) (U) There were no organizational changes in the Headquarters Company, 1st Aviation Brigade, APO 96384, Long Binh, RVN as of this date.

(3) (U) On 13 March 1968 1SG Dale A. Kahlstorff, RA17265201, replaced 1SG, SFC Charles A. Battit, RA11280156. SGT Battit returned to CONUS on completion of his tour.

(4) (C) Unit strength as of 30 April 1968:

(a) Military:

Officer Auth	WD Auth	EM Auth	TOTAL Auth
O/H	O/H	O/H	O/H
51	51	7	5
		178	203
		236	259

(b) Civilian:

D/C Auth	VN Auth	3d Nati Auth	Contractor
O/H	O/H	O/H	
1	1	15	45
		0	0
			0

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(5) (C) Aircraft status as of 30 April 1968:

UH-1 Auth O/H	U-21A Auth O/H	OH-6 Auth O/H	U6A Auth O/H
4	5	2	2
4	0	0	2

(6) (U) Flight Section aircraft flew 4,299 sorties during the reporting period.

2. (C) Section 2. Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations.

a. Personnel.

(1) (U) Award of the Combat Medical Badge (CMB)

(a) OBSERVATION. Current regulations prohibit award of the Combat Medical Badge to Army Medical Service personnel assigned to Cavalry units or organizations.

(b) EVALUATION. This policy does not take into consideration the fact that Army Medical Service Personnel are attached to the Rifle Platoons of Cavalry units. The mission of these Platoons is very similar to that of an Infantry unit and Infantry personnel assigned to the unit are authorized Award of the Combat Infantry Badge. However, Army Medical Service Personnel are not authorized Award of the Combat Medical Badge.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That the criteria for Award of the Combat Medical Badge be revised to coincide with that of the Combat Infantry Badge.

b. Operations.

(1) (C) OBSERVATION. Problems occurred in preparation and execution of the recent move of a 1st Aviation Brigade unit in which both the unit's location and its operational control headquarters were changed.

(2) (C) EVALUATION. The movement of the 308th CAB and its assigned companies from III Corps Tactical Zone and OPCON II FFV to I Corps Tactical Zone and OPCON 101st Abn Div, was complicated by unwieldy command/OPCON channels. MACV directed II FFV to move the 308th CAB to I Corps Tactical Zone on or about 15 March 1968 and to pass OPCON to 101st Abn Div when the 308th CAB arrived in I Corps Tactical Zone. II FFV is a tactical headquarters within an area of responsibility which includes only III Corps Tactical Zone and, in certain instances, limited areas in IV Corps Tactical Zone. II FFV does not control the necessary assets to accomplish such a move outside its assigned area. Additionally, II FFV was reluctant to relinquish the

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tactical use of 308th CAB until the movement date. 308th elements were required to perform near-normal combat missions until that date and were unable to stand down to properly coordinate and prepare for the move. Hq, USARV and Hq, 1st Avn Bde, were unable to materially assist in preparation and execution of the move, since neither headquarters exercises OPCON.

(3) (C) RECOMMENDATION. When moves involving changes in OPCON are required, OPCON by the losing headquarters be passed by MACV through Hq, USARV, to Hq, 1st Avn Bde, sufficiently in advance of the movement date to permit the unit to stand down, prepare and allow USARV and 1st Avn Bde to assist the unit in necessary arrangements. OPCON should be passed from Brigade to the gaining headquarters when unit becomes operational in its new location.

- a. Training. None
- d. Intelligence. None
- e. Logistics.

(1) (U) Brigade CMMI Team:

(a) OBSERVATION. The existing Brigade CMMI Team is inadequate to perform the mission of inspecting each assigned unit once per year as required. There are 113 company sized units now assigned to the Brigade which require inspection.

(b) EVALUATION.

1 A single CMMI Team is inadequate to perform an inspection of assigned units each year in compliance with AR 750-8.

2 The existing team is not staffed to perform inspections of assigned units. Aircraft Armament, Petroleum Handling, Engineer Equipment, Chemical, Small Arms, Vehicle, and Ammunition Storage, inspectors must be borrowed for each inspection. The remainder of the team is drawn out of Brigade Headquarters staff sections. Many of the borrowed specialists must come from outside Brigade resources as they are not authorized within the Brigade. None of the units which have the specialties authorized have the mission to support the Brigade CMMI Team. To adequately perform this inspection mission two full CMMI Teams are required. It is anticipated that total requirements for personnel to man the CMMI Teams would be 4 officers and 28 EM.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That this Headquarters be authorized and assigned adequate personnel to constitute two full CMMI Teams. MTOE action to this effect is being prepared.

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f. Organization. None

g. Information. None

h. Signal. None

i. Medical.

(1) (U) Aviation dispensaries.

(a) OBSERVATION. Aviation dispensaries, collocated with airfields, have proven invaluable.

(b) EVALUATION. During this reporting period, dramatic evidence of the value of airfield dispensaries was obtained. After an attack starts, ground transportation to nearby medical facilities, if they exist is impossible. At the same time, MEDEVAC ships are restricted in their operations by military action. The presence of the dispensary makes possible immediate life-saving treatment and, shortly after the attack, the establishment of a mass casualty receiving center.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. None required.

j. Safety. None

k. Chaplain.

(1) (U) Distribution of Chaplains.

(a) OBSERVATION. There should be a chaplain assigned to each combat aviation group, combat aviation battalion and air cavalry squadron.

(b) EVALUATION. It has been found that area coverage for religious activities provides only minimal coverage. With the companies and detachments of a combat aviation battalion based at several locations, it is often necessary for two or more chaplains to provide religious and pastoral coverage for one battalion. Such an arrangement limits the effectiveness of the chaplain.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That a chaplain be assigned to each combat aviation group, combat aviation battalion and air cavalry squadron as authorized by applicable MTOE's.

(2) (U) Assignment of Chaplain's Assistants.

(a) OBSERVATION. There should be an enlisted assistant assigned to each combat aviation group, combat aviation battalion and air cavalry squadron.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

(b) EVALUATION. It is necessary that each chaplain have an enlisted assistant to handle office duties, assist with services and travel with the chaplain. Since the chaplain cannot bear arms, the assistant must provide protection.

(c) RECOMMENDATION. That an enlisted assistant be assigned to each combat aviation group, combat aviation battalion, and air cavalry squadron is authorized by applicable MTUE's.

1. Headquarters Commandant. None

1 incl

2 incl

1 incl 1, 3-6, Withdrawn, Hqs, DA

*Eugene W. Hemingway, Maj*  
JACK W. HEMINGWAY for  
Colonel, Infantry  
Deputy Brigade Commander

DISTRIBUTION:

- 1 - Thru Chans to ACSFOR DA (crig cy)
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- 1 - S-3 Organizational History File

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AVHGC-DST (26 May 68) 1st Ind (C)

CPT Arnold/ms/LBN 4485

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade for Period  
Ending 30 Apr 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 8 JUN 1968

TO: ✓ Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT,  
APO 96558Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army,  
Washington, D. C. 203101. (U) This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned  
for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 1st Aviation  
Brigade.

2. (C) Comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning award of the Combat Medical Badge (CMB), page  
11, paragraph 2a(1): Nonconcur. Paragraph 98, AR 672-5-1 authorizes award of  
the CMB only to medical personnel assigned or attached to infantry units. DA  
has refused to make exceptions or expand the criteria to include medics assigned  
or attached to non-infantry units.b. Reference item concerning problems encountered in preparing for and  
executing movement of a 1st Aviation Brigade unit, page 11, paragraph 2b:  
Concur. It has been the experience of this headquarters that a five day stand-  
down followed by an administrative movement permits the move to be made in an  
orderly fashion. However, in many cases the tactical situation will not permit  
the luxury of a standdown and administrative move. Therefore, tactical moves  
should continue to be executed by the commander exercising OPCON and OPCON  
should pass directly to the gaining commander.c. Reference item concerning distribution of chaplains, page 11, paragraph  
2k(1), and assignment of chaplain's assistants, paragraph 2k(2): Nonconcur.  
Applicable MTOE's do not provide chaplains in the quantities recommended.  
Recommendation should read: That applicable TOE's or MTOE's be modified to  
authorize one (1) chaplain major and one (1) chaplain assistant E-5 per Aviation  
Group; and one (1) chaplain captain and one (1) chaplain assistant E-4 for each  
Combat Aviation Battalion and for each Air Cavalry Squadron.**CONFIDENTIAL**

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AVHGC-DST (26 May 68) 1st Ind (C)

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade for Period  
Ending 30 Apr 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U) 6 JUN 1968

d. Reference item concerning Brigade CMMI Team, page 12, paragraph 2e(1). The space ceiling imposed on USARV makes such an increase impracticable at this time. Upon receipt of mentioned MTOE, the indicated requirement will be evaluated; if considered valid, spaces to meet this requirement will be entered on the space priority list for financing as spaces become available.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*C. S. Nakatsukasa*  
C. S. NAKATSUKASA  
Captain, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Copy furnished:  
HQ, 1st Avn Bde

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GPOP-DT (26 May 68) 2d Ind (U)  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 1st Avn Bde for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 28 JUN 1968

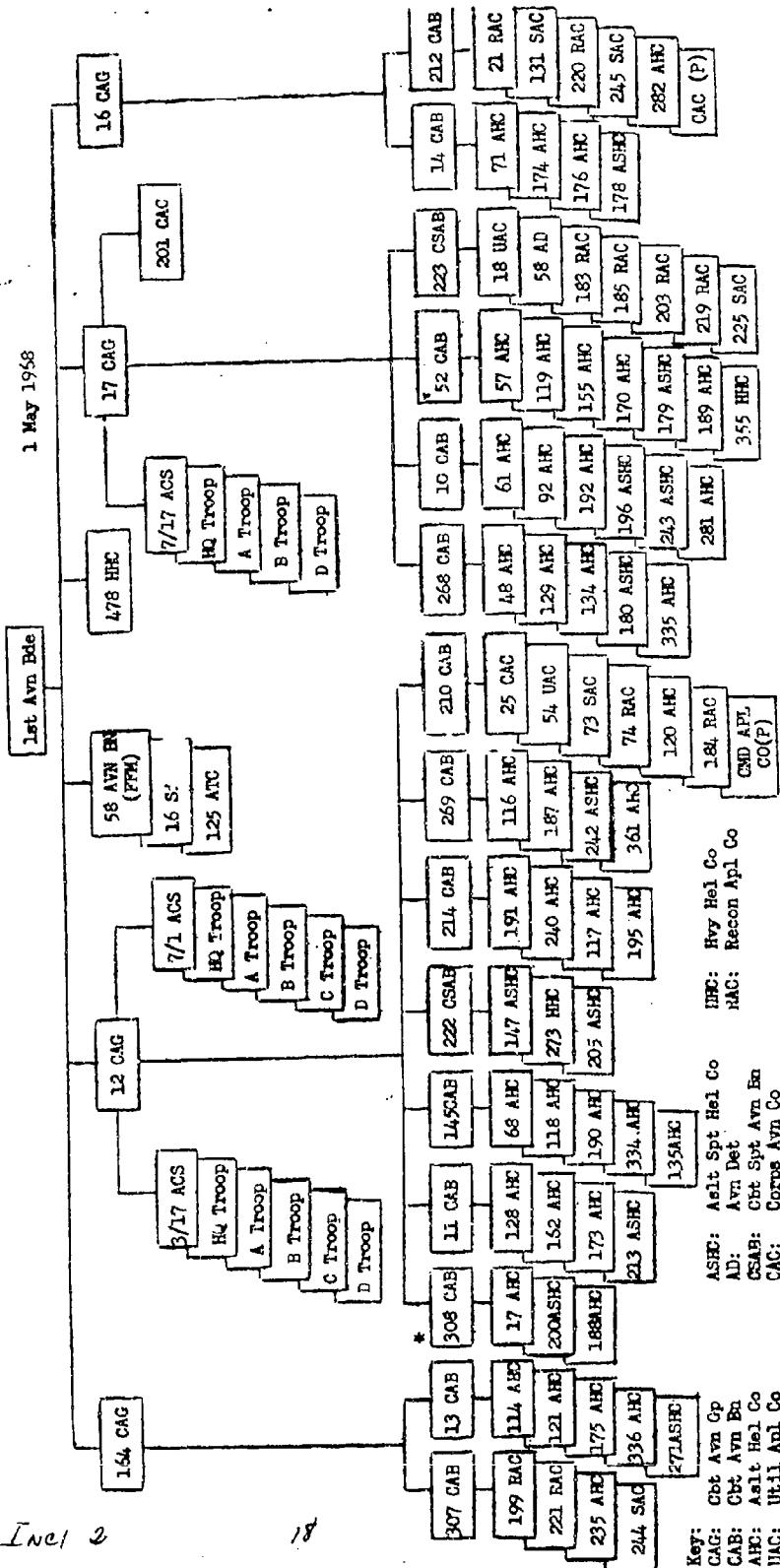
TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorse-  
ment and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

*CH Short*

C.I. SHORT  
CPT, AGC  
Asst AG



Key:  
CAG: CAB: AHC: UAC: SAC:

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE  
APO San Francisco 96384  
"NGUY-HIEM"

27 February 1968

AVBA

SUBJECT: Tactical Lessons Learned #7

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Attached is the seventh in a series of Tactical Lessons Learned. The items contained herein were extracted from unit Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarter 1 August - 31 October 1967 and are unclassified in order that widest dissemination can be made.

2. Units desiring additional copies of Tactical Lessons Learned may request them from this headquarters, ATTN: AVBA-C, stating the copy and number desired.

1 Incl  
as

*Jack W. Hemingway*  
JACK W. HEMINGWAY  
Colonel, Infantry  
Deputy Brigade Commander

DISTRIBUTION

A

Plus Special

19

Incl 7

AVBA

27 February 1968

SUBJECT: Tactical Lessons Learned Nr. 7

1. ITEM: Hazards of night aircraft recovery operations by CH-47.

DISCUSSION: Maintaining safe flight in the CH-47 at night or in instrument conditions while recovering damaged aircraft is extremely difficult. On the CH-47's initial climb out, the load has a tendency to oscillate. If the oscillations become severe, proper interpretations of flight instruments may become impossible and result in unusual attitudes. If this occurs, the only recourse is to jettison the load. Additionally, the minimum safe airspeed under instrument flight in the CH-47 is 60 knots. Frequently during aircraft recovery operations, a maximum of only 30 to 40 knots can be maintained.

OBSERVATION: Recovery operations should not be attempted under instrument conditions. At night, planning for recovery of downed aircraft should include provision for a visible horizon or reference. This can be accomplished by dropping flares along the line of flight to provide continuous illumination, or by having two UH-1s fly abeam of each other and ahead of the CH-47 with their navigation lights on. By maintaining a specified altitude, the UH-1s provide a useable reference for the CH-47.

2. ITEM: Firefly Operations.

DISCUSSION: Supported units continue to request firefly missions to operate over all types of terrain. To date the best success has been achieved in the delta and coastal areas and along navigable rivers and canals. Firefly operations in mountains and heavy jungle have had limited success while incurring significantly greater risks than is true in more open and flatter terrain.

OBSERVATION: Aviation commanders must objectively analyze fire fly requests, weighing the criticality of the mission and its chances for success against the hazards involved, then make appropriate recommendations to the supported commander.

3. ITEM: Mined landing Zones (LZs).

DISCUSSION: Increased use of mines in LZs by the enemy is evident throughout Vietnam. Regardless of heavy fire preparation, the presence of undamaged mines must not be overlooked. On occasion, aircraft crewmembers and ground troops have rushed to the aid of personnel injured by a mine, only to detonate other mines. The result may be other casualties, confusion and congestion in the LZ and the delay of succeeding, inbound aircraft.

OBSERVATION: Detonation of one mine in an LZ is evidence that others may exist. While it is human nature to render immediate

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SUBJECT: Tactical Lessons Learned Nr. 7

assistance to injured personnel, mission accomplishment is paramount. Aircraft must unload and depart an LZ as quickly as possible to permit continuation of the landing phase. Injured personnel may be treated by personnel already on the ground and evacuated as required, according to plan, without interference with the assault mission.

4. ITEM: Personnel aboard the alternate command and control (C&C) aircraft.

DISCUSSION: There are many valid uses for an alternate C&C aircraft during airmobile operations. However, the primary purpose is to transport the alternate command party of the ground force. If the C&C aircraft, with the airmobile task force commander, primary command party and the air mission commander (AMC) aboard, becomes incapacitated due to hostile fire or mechanical trouble, the alternate C&C assumes the primary role.

OBSERVATION: Parallel chains of command in the primary and alternate C&C aircraft will add depth to control, prevent confusion, and assure that ground forces are provided with competent leaders at all times. To preclude added confusion, the primary and alternate AMC should come from the same aviation battalion.

5. ITEM: Misuse of C&C Aircraft.

DISCUSSION: The C&C aircraft is designated for the express purpose of command and control of airmobile forces and fire support. Such things as engaging enemy targets during the conduct of airmobile operations may jeopardize mission accomplishment. Additionally, improper actions may result in the loss of the commanders and their fire support coordinators at a critical phase in an operation.

OBSERVATION: Commanders should restrict their actions to the important function of command and control. Through proper command and control, all elements of the force will function in accordance with their capabilities and the plan of action.

6. ITEM: Fires in pick up zones (PZ).

DISCUSSION: Recently a grass fire at an artillery fire base burned out of control and ignited artillery ammunition. Rotor wash was a contributing factor to the rapid spread of the fire along with failure of the artillery personnel to fight the fire before it got out of control.

OBSERVATION: During the dry season, elephant grass is highly flammable. Grass must be cleared from around ammunition dumps. Smoke grenades must be located out of the flight path of aircraft and be

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SUBJECT: Tactical Lessons Learned Nr. 7

firmly fixed in place to prevent upsetting the grenade and allowing it to be blown about by rotor wash. Helicopters must not enter installations where grass fires are present until given positive clearance from ground control. Ground control should not call aircraft into the area until the fire is under control unless justified by an emergency situation. Helicopter crew must be alert for a wave-off. Ground commanders should understand their responsibility to aid in extinguishing fires within their immediate area. Air mission commanders should determine that pick up zones are safe prior to resuming operations.

7. ITEM: Selection of intermediate PZs for airmobile extractions.

DISCUSSION: Frequently airmobile operations are planned to culminate with an airmobile extraction of ground forces. The ground commander may overestimate the distance he is able to traverse in rugged terrain and fails to arrive at the intended PZ at extraction time. Consequently, marginally suitable intermediate PZs, not planned for, are used to effect extraction.

OBSERVATION: Planning for airmobile extractions should include alternate PZs.

8. ITEM: Inspection of bomb shackles and jettison apparatus.

DISCUSSION: Several inflight emergencies have occurred during rocket firing from O-1 aircraft and armed helicopters. Rockets may lodge in the tubes after firing. Battle damage to rockets may cause inflight fires. These and other emergency situations may require jettisoning the rocket tube or pod to prevent further damage. On occasion, when the jettison mechanism was activated the bomb shackle malfunctioned due to improper maintenance. Malfunctions of this nature may result in complete failure to jettison, delayed jettison or partial jettison in which the tube or pod dangles from the bomb shackle in such fashion as to produce additional hazards.

OBSERVATION: Bomb shackle mechanisms and all electrical quick disconnect canon plugs on rocket tubes or pods must be regularly inspected, tested and properly maintained to minimize malfunctions at critical times.

9. ITEM: Glare in OV-1 caused by unshielded RO-166 recorder processor viewer.

DISCUSSION: At night, the use of the RO-166 without it's visor creates a glare to the aviator, presenting a safety hazard. Use of the visor inhibits navigational assistance the radar set

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provides. One solution is the use of a 16" X 30" canvas covering draped over the raised observation window.

OBSERVATION: The use of the canvas cover greatly reduces glare in the cockpit without depriving the aviator of the use of the radar screen for navigational purposes. In addition, the observer may use the bright mode of viewer illumination which improves his target detection capability.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE  
APO San Francisco 96384  
"NGUY-HIEM"

AVBA-C

17 February 1968

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned During VC/NVA TET Offensive - Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade (U)

TO: Commanding General  
United States Army Vietnam  
ATTN: AVHGC-0  
APO 96375

SECTION I - Planning and Preparation Which Affected the Command's Readiness Posture Upon Initiation of the TET Offensive.

1. (U) Personnel: None
2. (U) Intelligence: See paragraph 3b Sect I
3. (C) Operations:
  - a. Item: Inadequate security at Long Binh Heliport

Discussion: Before Tet, the 120th Assault Helicopter Company was providing the sole heliport defense, 31 guards. Thirty-one was the maximum number of personnel the 120th AHC could provide without degrading its primary mission. In addition, there were inadequate strong points established along the perimeter.

Lesson Learned: The possibility of enemy attack always exists and security must be constantly reviewed and improved. The Long Binh security plan has been revised by Long Binh Post to increase the number of security personnel available by levying other Long Binh Post tenant units and with self-help assistance by constructing additional towers and bunkers with engineer personnel.

Recommendation: Installation security plans and provisions be continually reviewed and improved.

- b. Item: Need for a Brigade Headquarters combat operations center.

Discussion: A Brigade Headquarters combat operations center did not exist prior to the TET Offensive. There was no secure and hardened location

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SUBJECT: Lessons Learned During VC/NVA TET Offensive - Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade (U)

in which all necessary communications facilities, planning maps, operational reference files, intelligence reference material and key command and staff personnel could be centralized. Existing structures did not meet light discipline, security and shelter requirements.

Lesson Learned: There is a need for a Brigade Headquarters combat operations center and one is now being constructed.

Recommendation: None

4. (C) Logistics:

a. Item: Insufficient allocation of certain ammunition items.

Discussion: As a result of the increased level of activity during the period 30 January - 14 February 1968, on-hand stockage of ammunition items, particularly 2.75 inch aerial rockets (H490) and L407 flares, was insufficient to sustain combat operations at the increased rate. Emergency aerial resupply was necessary under most difficult circumstances and with considerable added risk.

Lesson Learned: Ammunition allocations must be revised and sufficient ammunition items by type stockpiled in advance at isolated bases such as Vinh Long, Can Tho and Soc Trang, so as to provide for increased rates of expenditure based upon experience gained from the recent TET activity.

Recommendation: A detailed analysis of the ammunition allocations will be accomplished by this headquarters. The final recommendations will be forwarded by separate action.

5. (C) Signal:

a. Item: Loss of teletype communications

Discussion: Some base camps received heavy enemy fire which damaged all types of communications relying on wire, such as telephone and teletype. Two weeks after the major enemy activity began, many cables were still not repaired.

Lessons Learned: Radio teletype can usually supplement land line teletype although it is dependent upon propagation of radio waves. This propagation varies during the day and occasionally the signal is not strong enough for transmission of secure radio teletype. Units must maintain a radio teletype net ready for immediate use. Radio operators and teletype operators will be cross-trained and ready to operate the new and more complex type radio teletype equipment now being distributed to Brigade units.

Recommendation: None

b. Item: Status of major items of communications equipment.

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Discussion: Specific items of communications equipment are required for adequate command and control of units distant from their headquarters. The Brigade Headquarters had no system established to determine when major signal items were lost or damaged.

Lesson Learned: A required spot report of signal equipment damaged beyond immediate repair would enable the Brigade S-4 and Signal Officer to re-adjust assets to meet immediate needs of particular units. A system has been established to require reporting of loss or damage of selected signal equipment.

Recommendation: None.

6. (U) Surgeon:

a. Item: Medical bunker facilities.

Discussion: Several airfield dispensaries were under mortar/rocket attack and/or ground attack. In some cases bunkers were available where casualties could be treated, but at other locations such bunkers were not available or inadequate.

Lessons Learned: Bunkered medical facilities are needed in the event of enemy attack and Brigade units will take action to provide these.

Recommendations: None

SECTION II - Conduct of Operations During the TET Offensive.

1. (U) Personnel:

a. Item: Disruption in the flow of replacements.

Discussion: Replacement operations throughout Vietnam were disrupted for four days. No new personnel came into the country because ports were closed. No replacements could be moved in-country from replacement battalions due to hostile operations. Although no Brigade units were seriously affected by a lack of personnel, serious problems could have resulted if the flow of replacements had been interrupted for a longer period.

Lesson Learned: The flow of replacements can be disrupted during periods of intense enemy activity.

Recommendations: Contingency plans to provide for air delivery of critical replacement personnel to units experiencing shortages be developed. Also, contingency plans for back-up sea delivery of replacements from nearby out-of-country locations be developed to preclude stoppage of the replacement flow when air delivery from CONUS to Vietnam is not feasible.

b. Item: Flow of casualty and other administrative reports.

Discussion: During periods of intense enemy activity, land-line and

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**SUBJECT: Lessons Learned During VC/NVA TET Offensive - Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade (U)**

and radio communications circuits become overloaded or inoperative, thus reducing the ability to receive timely casualty and administrative information.

**Lesson Learned:** Administrative information must be reduced to an absolute minimum and consist only of those items necessary for the conduct of operations and evaluation of personnel and material resources. The Brigade will specify information which is required during periods of intense enemy activity and designate primary and secondary means of communications for reporting.

**Recommendations:** None

**2. (U) Intelligence:**

a. **Item:** There was an inadequate flow of timely intelligence and enemy information to Brigade Headquarters.

**Discussion:** Brigade Headquarters receives intelligence and reports of enemy activity in the form of the USARV Weekly Summary, the daily AOC report and the USARDAY. Additionally, the headquarters receives the Long Binh Post daily INTSUM. Reports of enemy operations and activities are required on a timely basis in order to keep the Brigade commander and his staff completely informed.

**Lessons Learned:** Intelligence reports of enemy activity received on a daily and weekly basis are inadequate to keep the Brigade Commander and his staff informed.

**Recommendations:** Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade, be provided intelligence and reports of enemy activity on a more timely basis.

**3. (C) Operations:**

a. **Item:** Combat damage assessment.

**Discussion:** Assessment of combat damage was difficult during the TET offensive for several reasons:

(1) Established reports did not give the desired information and/or did not arrive on a timely basis.

(2) Damage to communications by enemy action delayed the flow of information.

(3) Cut-off times for reports were unrealistic in that many aircraft were still on missions and crews were unable to report full details to unit operations.

(4) Need for classification of existing reports denied the use of functional telephone systems.

**Lessons Learned:** More effective reporting procedures must be established to provide the commander timely damage assessment information.

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SUBJECT: Lessons Learned During VC/NVA TET Offensive - Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade (U)

Recommendation: Information needed for damage assessment must be established prior to periods of intense enemy activity and back-up means for transmission included in contingency plans. This headquarters has identified the information considered necessary and is improving its back-up communications system.

4. (C) Logistics:

a. Item: During the TET Offensive the movement of aircraft supply parts from depot to direct support units was halted for four days.

Discussion: During the TET offensive, movement of aircraft parts became critical. Due to missions accorded higher priority, US Air Force aircraft normally tasked with movement of these parts from the 58th Trans Bn depot located at Tan Son Nhut to direct support units located at major airfields were not available for resupply purposes. Attempts to move these parts by other means were largely unsuccessful. Aircraft availability throughout the command reflected a high EDP rate.

Lessons Learned: Aircraft parts will become critical during periods of intense enemy activity if low priority is given to movement of these parts from depot to direct support unit level.

Recommendation: Priorities be established to insure the uninterrupted flow of aircraft parts during periods of intense enemy activity.

5. (C) Signal:

a. Item: Communications with USARV Headquarters.

Discussion: The Brigade has no means of communications with USARV other than telephone, courier or mail. Since USARV does not operate a radio or teletype net available to Brigade, Brigade Headquarters would be unable to communicate with USARV if enemy activity denied the use of roads and telephones.

Lesson Learned: The need for back-up radio communications with USARV exists. Permission has been requested to enter the Long Binh Post FM Ground Defense net (monitored by USARV AOC) when the situation so dictates.

Recommendation: None

6. (C) Surgeon:

a. Item: Aviator fatigue

Discussion: Acrews, particularly those of helicopter gunships, accumulated exceedingly high flying hour totals over a short time period. Many of these crews appeared to be mentally and physically exhausted at the end of the

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period. It seems that the excitement and feeling of accomplishment observed in these crews may have given them additional physiological resources for a short time extra "push". The knowledge that medical support was immediately available to them undoubtedly contributed.

Lesson Learned: Aircrows can accumulate high flying hour totals in a short time period under stress. Physical and mental stress was apparent when the stressful situation subsided.

Recommendation: Aviator flying hours be monitored constantly by flight surgeons and commanders. Particular emphasis must be placed upon providing appropriate rest periods after an accelerated accumulation of combat hours.

/S/ Jack W. Hemingway  
// JACK W. HEMINGWAY  
COL, Infantry  
Deputy Brigade Commander

"TRUE COPY"

L. C. O'Rourke

L. C. O'Rourke  
MAJ, Infantry  
Historian

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